

An abstract collage of architectural elements in shades of orange, yellow, and black. It features geometric shapes, lines, and textures that suggest a modern building facade. The collage is composed of various rectangular and triangular sections, some with fine grid patterns and others with more solid colors. The overall effect is a dynamic and layered representation of architecture.

Leonard Hill Books

PHILIP BOOTH &
NICHOLAS TAYLOR

A Guide to Cambridge New Architecture

Three Walks from the
Market Place

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Contents

Preface

The First Walk	1
North-western Cambridge and the Arbury and King's Hedges Estates	

The Second Walk	35
Eastern Cambridge: Midsummer Common, East Road, Parker's Piece	

The Third Walk	49
Market Hill to Station through Newnham and Newtown	

Index to Architects and Artists

Buildings and General Index

Preface

Unlike our larger book, "Cambridge New Architecture", the "Guide" is not intended as a comprehensive survey of all post-war buildings in Cambridge. It is not even a selection of the best new buildings. What it does aim to do, however, is to show a typical cross-section of what has been built in the last twenty years, by the city, by the university and by individuals, and to place this in the context of the town as a whole.

The book is divided into three sections, each of which is based on a walk through different parts of Cambridge. The choice of the walks was determined not only by the buildings which they lead to, but also by the desire to show the reader the nature of Cambridge and the differences between its parts. Thus there are marked contrasts between walks, and indeed along the walks themselves, contrasts which are explicit in the descriptions of new buildings, and implicit in the routes that have been chosen. Inevitably as a result of choosing certain areas only, there have been some notable omissions: buildings whose quality is such that they are worthy of consideration at a national scale, and those which, for whatever reasons, have inspired particular affection (or hate). We can only regret that this has happened and reaffirm that the book is intended to show the typical and not the special.

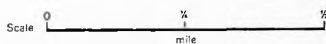
The picture that these three walks show is, in the final analysis, disheartening; disheartening because the upsurge of university building in the past decade, and the influx of architectural talent that it has created, has led, not to an enriched environment, but to confusion and overstatement. And at the same time, architects have in some cases shown themselves almost unbelievably callous towards the quality of Cambridge. If you are a visitor to the town, do not be surprised to find that Cambridge has its share of miserably cut-price environment; be alive, merely, to the difference between this and the exaggerated striving for effect that

university affluence has sometimes led to.

Though the over-rich diet of architectural waywardness leads eventually to indigestion, it is not without its compensations: there are on these walks, buildings which give real pleasure, and some which go far to restate the purpose they serve. Then, too, there are buildings which lay no claim to special merit, and yet, in small ways, satisfy because of their unpretentiousness and their ability to echo the tenor of their setting. But, by and large, while the "great" names of English architecture occur repeatedly on these pages, East Anglian architects like Feilden and Mawson and Tayler and Green are represented only by unimportant works or not at all. Perhaps if the university had resisted more often the snobbery of choosing a fashionable name the results would have been less highly-strung.

It is arguable that the very source of the failure of its new buildings is Cambridge's claim to architectural interest. There are few places in the town where new buildings do not make some demand upon one's attention and there are few about which one can be entirely dismissive, even if too seldom they can justify their virtuosity. The overall result may be disheartening, but it yields nonetheless a valuable insight into the strengths and weaknesses of modern English architecture.

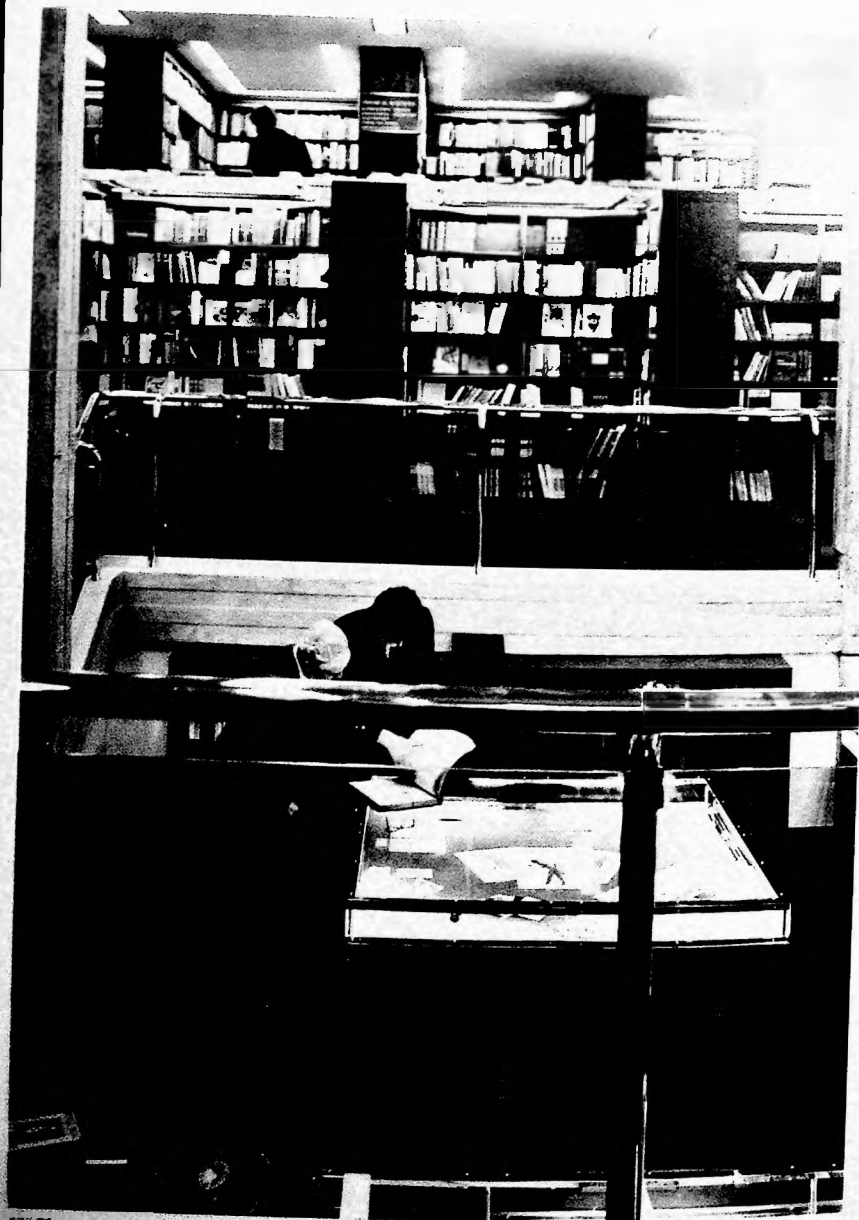
Thanks are due to Grant Lewison, Nicholas Hughes and Tom Wesley who organised and published the first edition of "Cambridge New Architecture", to Malcolm Rowe and John Greenwood who came in for the second edition and to Stephen Prickett for the third. Oxford Illustrators did new drawings for the "Guide" and Mrs Nicholson typed the manuscript. We are also most grateful to the help we have been given by architects and clients alike without which preparation of the book would have become a difficult task; and we look forward to thanking anyone who brings errors to our attention so that future editions can be even more reliable.



- A** Heffers' Bookshop
- B** Trinity College Wolfson Building
- C** St John's College Cripps Building
- D** Girton College Wolfson Court
- E** Churchill College
- F** Fitzwilliam College
- G** New Hall
- H** Arbury Estate
- I** King's Hedges
- J** Kettle's Yard
- K** Magdalene College

..... Footpath





Hefflers' Bookshop: view across the well

The First Walk

North-western Cambridge and the Arbury and King's Hedges Estates

Walking through the acardia of west Cambridge's academic suburb it is not always easy to remember that the University, in terms of numbers, is only a fairly small part of the whole town. This walk aims to relate the two by combining the three new undergraduate colleges with the City's two adjoining estates on the northern side of the town. One's first reaction is to the contrast of the luxuriance of the University's environment and the relative meanness of the town's; and certainly the Arbury estate has been rightly vilified for its weaknesses, even though there are signs of improvement now. But the University has its share of weaknesses too, not only in the individual buildings themselves where all too often the whole rhetoric of a collegiate style becomes mere bombast, but also in the almost total lack of coordination of building with building.

Market Hill itself is undistinguished, dominated by Cowles-Voysey's Guildhall to the south and Murray Easton's pleasant St. Michael's Court for Caius to the north. These both date from the thirties. The only major new building is Radcliffe Court (1965) by Stanley R. Nevell & Partners which is part residential and part commercial. The white façade with its upper floors set in echelon to face sympathetically back into the square from the corner was an enforced rescue operation by the City Architect's department; the maisonettes behind are pedestrian in the extreme. No. 9 Rose Crescent was rebuilt as part of the development, but the skillful use of old bricks makes the rebuilding virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the early 19th century terrace.

Turn right out of Rose Crescent into Trinity Street. On the right hand side opposite Trinity, you come to Heffers' Bookshop, which is the best commercial development that Cambridge has had to date. It forms part of Trinity's comprehensive redevelopment of the Matthews grocery site.

HEFFERS' MAIN BOOKSHOP

Date	1968-70
Architects	Austin-Smith Lord
Contractor	John E. Wiltshier & Co. Ltd.
Cost	£140,000

Requirement. Sales storage and office space to replace Heffers' Bookshop in Petty Cury.

Description. As long ago as 1964, when Trinity were preparing plans for the redevelopment of the whole of the Matthews site, they offered Heffers a long lease in a shop which would form an integral part of the project. The development of the rest of the Matthews site, being carried out by the Architects Co-Partnership, is described on page 2. Heffers appointed Austin-Smith Lord as their consultants first 'to cut their teeth' on a relatively small job, the conversion of the old Morgan Furze wineshop on the opposite side of the street, to Heffers' Children's Bookshop, and then to carry out the main bookshop and the design of Heffers' corporate identity. Originally, Heffers were offered a standard shop shell on one floor and a corresponding basement but later they took the opportunity to obtain a far greater basement area which allowed them to use part of the basement as a sales space.

The architects have exploited this opportunity by creating a single unified sales space within which there are book stacks at four different levels. Linking the ground floor and the basement is a central well; within the well is a mezzanine platform used for antiquarian books, and around the perimeter of the ground floor on three sides runs a gallery. Book stacks are on the 'supermarket' principle and the main sales and information desk assume considerable importance on the main axis of the shop which connects the entrance with the double-height space. Behind the store itself are the staff offices; the directors have views onto Trinity's 'Garden of Eden'.

The exterior of the shop has not affected the upper storeys of the Trinity Street frontage at all. A deep bronze fascia and two bronze clad columns make the major statement; behind them are the bronze-framed display windows, recessed at the main entrance. The floor finish is in brick at the front of the shop, but once well inside, this changes to fawn-and-grey-striped fitted carpet. The internal finishes are simple but exemplary. The columns are in board-marked concrete, as are the stairs; the shelving is in stained ash; and the handrails are tubular chrome with glass panels. Strip lighting is fitted to the bookstacks, concealed in tubular chrome fittings. Ceiling lighting is mostly by recessed fluorescent fittings, except where tungsten fittings emphasise the entry axis.

Comment. Oxford has its Blackwells (designed by Maguire and Murray in 1966), now Cambridge can at last compete with its Heffers. And there is no denying that Heffers is a strong competitor. Perhaps the most admirable feature of the building is the consistency with which Austin-Smith Lord have carried out their basic concept. For Heffers' central well, with bookstack tiered upon bookstack and activity on four levels, does delight, and the

effect has not been achieved without care. First of all, the entry is deadpan. Books are in themselves fascinating things and it is their appeal which draws the buyer in. Then the entry is at a relatively low level of lighting, but it is the bright lighting at the far end of the entry vista which leads one on to the heart of the building. Here, once again, it is the books which play a major part in the creation of the space and the architecture appears subordinate. The untutored eye will not perhaps notice the concealed lighting above the bookstacks which is helping to make the richness of the surfaces, nor perhaps realise the effect even the light sparkling on the chrome has in creating diversity and interest. Both activity and visual diversity are at their most intense at the edges of the space. From bookstacks through more bookstacks, we come to the relatively uncluttered space immediately around the well where display cases look over from sales; and then in the centre lies the tranquillity of the rare books section, isolated on its platform in the well, a sort of holy of holies within the activity around.

The architects have successfully manipulated the space so that the structure, which is largely dictated by Trinity's Wolfson Building above, serves their ends. The columns have been used to resolve the conflict between the axial movement from the entrance and the centroidal major space. Rather than having columns at all four corners of the well, there are two at the corners nearest the entrance (echoing those in the facade) and two, two-thirds of the way towards the back of the shop. Central to these four is another column around which the space pivots. At the back of the well there are no columns in the corner positions; instead a line of four (two close together within the well and two more beyond its outer limits) effectively form a screen to reflect the closing of the space at the end of the shop.

The architects have managed to create within this major space a diversity of small environments. The use of mezzanine levels has meant that the bookstacks are to a human scale and there are plenty of opportunities to browse in comfort. The concealed lighting over the stacks helps here, too, in concentrating on the immediate surroundings of books.

The design principle which Austin-Smith Lord have used at Heffers is not new. Aalto has used the idea in a number of schemes before and after the war; Blackwells itself has been designed around a central well. What they have done, however, is show us that the principle is still relevant.

To get from Heffers to Trinity's Wolfson building, which to some extent redeems their past record, go through Whewell's Court, on the same side of Trinity Street as Heffers.

informal liturgy of eating and reading. New Hall's curvaceous white skin seems a rather cynically masculine view of what a women's college should symbolize.

Huntingdon Road is one of the places in Cambridge where University opulence comes into direct contact with the cottage scale of Cambridge city. Cross over Huntingdon Road to Victoria Road and you are plunged immediately into New Chesterton where spec builders rushed up cheap houses in the 1860s and 70s because it was then outside the borough and had lower rates. Turn right into Harvey Goodwin Avenue and right again into Stretton Avenue where Victorian spec. becomes inter-wars spec. Cross Gilbert Road, and you finally enter the Arbury Estate by the Carlton Arms pub.

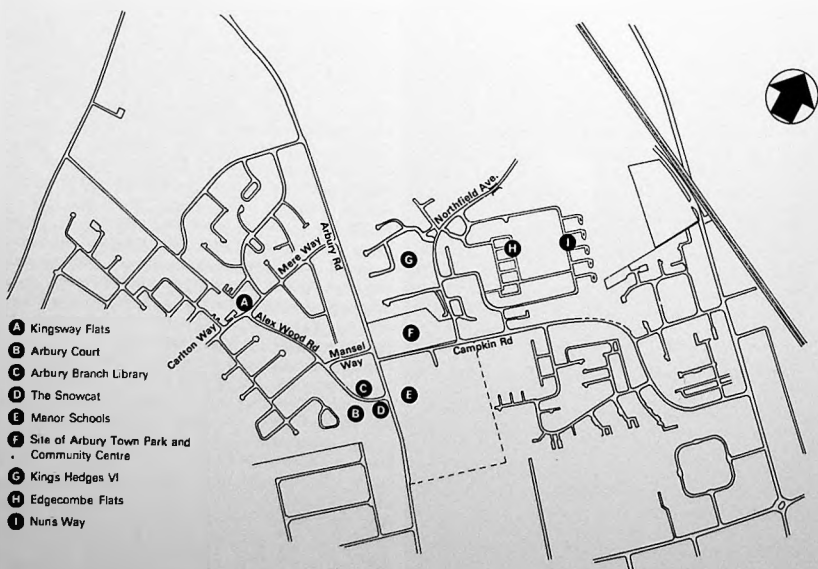
ARBURY ESTATE

Site Bounded by Arbury, Milton, Gilbert and Histon Roads.

Date 1955-

Architects T. V. Burrows, former city surveyor (housing, schools, shops). Gordon Logie, former city architect (Kingsway, Branch Library). S. E. Dykes Bower (the church of St. Nicholas Ferrar). David Roberts ('The Snowcat').

Arbury Estate is an attempt to found a self-contained suburb of Cambridge—a mid-twentieth century village with its own church, pubs, shopping centre and schools. In intention it



Arbury and King's Hedges Estates

was a admirable attempt to get away from the straggling ribbon development of between the wars. Access from the main roads is limited to a small number of distributor roads. Off these in turn run minor roads and culs-de-sac, and there are a number of pedestrian alleyways and paths. The housing is laid out in a variety of forms: some detached, some semi-detached and a majority of terraced houses in groups of four to six. There are also blocks of six-storey flats in Roseford Road. All this is not very different in vital statistics from a neighbourhood area in a first generation new town. It shares the same general advantages—gardens for almost everyone, healthy open spaces for children, a humane scale—and the same crippling defects—an inadequate traffic system, far too few garages, a diffuse unneighbourly layout with great distances between groups of houses and a general lack of focus. At Arbury, things are made worse by the evident lack of the three-dimensional planning inherent in the new towns. Architecturally the housing is extremely weak: prim brick terraces with utility steel or concrete doorways of modish design. The general plan of Arbury defies rational analysis. The roads curve in the relaxed manner of the garden city, but the layout totally lacks the disciplined formality that in fact lay behind the plans of Letchworth or Hampstead Garden Suburb. The result has been a squandering of Cambridge's short supply of housing land, not merely in unusable grass verges and planted street corners, but in large patches of coarse grass, signifying nothing.

Nowhere is this gap between humane intention and chaotic performance more evident than at the Alex Wood/Arbury Road junction. Here are the buildings which in theory should unite the community: a pedestrian shopping precinct, a pub, two secondary schools and a Church. The haphazard and unrelated effect is not the result of poor architectural detail: the public house, 'The Snowcat', is one of the best of its date in the country. Again, the Manor secondary school, designed in the city surveyor's department, uses an industrialized building system with intelligence and considerable flexibility. Admittedly the church of St. Nicholas Ferrar is an embarrassment, in the sort of gimcrack which has compromised the Church of England long after the great Victorians last designed in Gothic with passion and sincerity. This gloomy, dark brick building, built in 1957-8 (chancel) and 1963-4 (nave) seems weird compared with other new churches in Cambridge, let alone those on the Continent. It displays Romanesque in the nave arcade, seventeenth-century Gothic in the windows, and early twentieth-century Anglican good taste in the interior decor. The architect was Stephen Dykes Bower, surveyor to Westminster Abbey.

The pedestrian shopping centre (Arbury Court), a three-sided courtyard opening off the bend in Alex Wood Road, is placed so that it can only be seen from a few angles and does not link up with the nearby housing. Parked cars screen it off from the road. This is a great pity, because the shopping centre is quite well designed in itself—and pedestrian precincts were by no means as widely accepted in 1957-8 as they are now. Above the shops are maisonettes and flats, making two four-storey sides joined by a three-storey wing. The structure is a simple reinforced concrete frame, expressed clearly in the ground floor colonnades and upper floor access balconies. Facings are in pale yellow bricks with precast panels on one end elevation. The mosaic covering of the colonnades is an unfortunate commercial cliché. The main design weakness is the failure to make anything of the courtyard space, which is an expanse of tarmac, inset with paving stones, litter baskets and free-standing advertisement displays. The space could still be made lively, for example, by the erection of a café or tea bar in a light-hearted building of temporary construction.

The former city architect Gordon Logie made two additions to the estate after his appointment in 1962: these are the Branch Library at the corner of Alex Wood and Arbury Roads and a block of flats, 'Kingsway', at the end of Roseford Road (see below). These both show a marked improvement of design that augurs well for future housing in the city.

Other buildings on the Arbury Estate include the junior and infants schools in Carlton Way, earlier and less successful efforts by the city surveyor's department, and on Milton Road the R.C. church of St. Laurence (1958) by Barry Hastings, a Gothic design over which a veil is best drawn.

The first significant building group you come to after entering Arbury is Kingsway Flats. They were built on the last remaining piece of open ground within the estate, after the city had appointed their first architect, Gordon Logie.

Kingsway Flats

At the junction of Roseford Road, Alex Wood Road and Carlton Way.

Date	1966-8
Architect	Gordon Logie, city architect
Contractor	Keridge Ltd.
Cost	£480,000

Requirement. Flats, garages, children's play-spaces, and a health and dental clinic.

Description. The flats are arranged in five five-storey blocks which form a large open-sided court at the corner of Carlton Way and Topham Way, a smaller similar court to the north on Mere Way and a garage court on Butler Way and Roseford Road. In the large southern court are garages over which has been provided a substantial paved area for ball-games, linked by ramps and stairs to ground level. At its north-eastern corner the upper level is linked directly to the flats. The smaller court on Mere Way has an infants' play area with sand, water and climbing logs. The flats have an access gallery at third floor level reached by lifts at two points: from this gallery stairs go up and down to the second and fourth floors, while the first floor is reached by stairs from the ground. This means that no one need climb more than one flight of stairs.

The construction is brick cross-wall with precast concrete floor and roof slabs. Only the roof slab is expressed, where an exposed granite aggregate is used. The bricks are Dorking pressed facings dark red in colour.

Comment. This is a successful attempt at relating blocks of flats to an awkward space in the midst of existing housing. They provide a useful focal point at the end of Alex Wood Road and Carlton Way which both had badly lacked hitherto. Moreover, the spaces between the blocks seem to make good sense, too; although there seems to be a danger that the infants could easily stray off their playspace onto the road. But the large court over the garages provides a much needed hard area. Only the flats themselves are unsatisfactory. The large areas of dark brickwork present a massive and overbearing front that was not suggested in the original sketches. Perhaps a stronger expression of the cross walls and a subduing of the panels between would have created a less gloomy outlook.

Turn right into Alex Wood Road from Kingsway Flats and you arrive at what is physically the very heart of the estate, where Alex Wood Road meets Arbury Road. On the right is the Arbury Court shopping centre; to the left St. Nicholas Ferrar's Church, beyond which is the Arbury branch library described in detail below. On the far side of Arbury Court is David Roberts's public house, the 'Snowcat', and beyond that are the Manor Schools.



Kingsway flats, seen across play area

Arbury Court Branch Library

Date	1965
Architect	Gordon Logie, city architect
Contractor	Henry J. Rodgers & Partners, Comberton
Cost	£15,061



Arbury Court branch library

Description. Sited on the corner of this bleak intersection, the library was to serve as a physical and visual link between Arbury Road and Arbury Court. Its curving shape accentuates the importance of this link. It is single-storey, built in loadbearing brick with steel joists. Bush-hammered concrete lintels are placed over the openings and the windows are anodized aluminium. Internally, lowered ceilings have been used to create an intimate scale in the junior library and to emphasize the importance of the issue desk. An exhibition and browsing area has been introduced between the adult and junior sections.

Comment. Not surprisingly, this pleasant little building has been quite overwhelmed by the task of uniting Arbury Court with the rest of the scheme. It has become just another incident in this peculiar assortment of architectural odds-and-ends. But for itself, it is attractively detailed and well thought-out. The entrance is cleverly announced by the break in the curving brick wall; the interiors are appropriate to their function; and the lighting is good. It is an unassuming but successful product of a kind which one has begun to expect from the architect's department.

Cross over the Manor Schools into Campkin Road which marks the beginning of the City's newer King's Hedges estate.

KING'S HEDGES ESTATE

Site Bounded by King's Hedges, Arbury, Milton and Histon Roads.

Date 1962-

Architects T. V. Burrows, former city surveyor (housing); Ian Purdy in succession to Gordon Logie, city architect (housing, schools); David Roberts ('Jenny Wren'); Vickers & Undrill (Surgery)

Housing was started off King's Hedges Road before the war, as a continuation north from Chesterton; but this remained an isolated development until after the completion of the greater part of the Arbury Estate with which it is now linked.

The first half of the new estate was designed by the city surveyor's department and begun in 1962. Spreading south-westwards from King's Hedges Road along the spine of Campkin Road, which joins Arbury Road by the Manor Schools, the languid curves and suburban layout seem to be a depressing repetition of Arbury. All the same elements are there: the vacant greenswards, the coy terraces, the meaningless disposition of roads, and the evident lack of three-dimensional planning. And yet King's Hedges is not a total failure in the same way as Arbury. This is partly due to the fact that Campkin Road serves clearly as a spine to which the other roads are tributary; it is also due to the fact that the 'centre' of King's Hedges, unlike that at Arbury, is not a collection of disparate elements, but has a certain surprising unity. At a curve in Campkin Road, the housing steps back on either side to form what is effectively a village green. A small row of shops closes one end—to one side the terrace of houses is staggered back, and in the western corner is the 'Jenny Wren' pub by David Roberts. There is, too, an improvement in the detailing of the houses at this point with trim weather boarding replacing acres of brick. Only the 'Jenny Wren' is a curious disappointment in comparison with the 'Snowcat' at Arbury. Sited at the corner of Campkin Road and St. Kilda Avenue, it presents a strangely aggressive collection of deep, dark-stained fascias with an entrance on the corner.

When Gordon Logie was appointed city architect, King's Hedges was further developed and became an experimental breeding ground for new ideas. One of the first developments was the use of Calder prefabricated houses in Nun's Way and Cameron Road; but these proved too inflexible and poorly finished, with a result that only some 30 houses were built. West of Nun's Way are the 'Edgecombe' flats—96 dwellings in six different-sized blocks—which are informally but successfully



King's Hedges VI

groups around a cul-de-sac. They are three-storey and built of loadbearing brick with tower-like staircases projecting on the inside of the blocks.

More successful than the flats are King's Hedges housing areas IV-VI, which Ian Purdy continued in succession to Gordon Logie. King's Hedges VI follows very much on the lines established at King's Hedges IV, Nun's Way, with groups of houses around pedestrian courts and culs-de-sac feeding garage entrances on the far sides. Bounding this area visually are four-storey flats. No strong pedestrian routes dominate this area, and there is not the clarity or organization that King's Hedges IV shows. But the detailing of the brick vernacular style is simple, and when the landscaping (by Gordon Patterson) is complete the scheme promises to be attractive.

Another encouraging development promised for the future is the Arbury Town Park, to be landscaped to the designs of Gordon Patterson. It will occupy the dreary portion of wasteland between Arbury and Campkin Roads to the west of the Manor Schools. The aim is to link the shopping areas in Arbury with King's Hedges. An informal path is to lead to a 'mall' through a planted area in a formal garden, tennis courts and bowling greens:

the mall will emerge at the north end of the site in a children's playground and once more become an informal path leading to the housing.

In the middle of Arbury Town Park is to be a community centre which, it is intended, will include a hall, club rooms, play rooms, and old people's room and changing areas. Unfortunately parking provision has had to be made for the community centre within the Town Park. However, if the earth banking is carried out as the drawings show, the effect of the cars will be immunised. All three schemes show that finally the city is awakening to its responsibilities in north Cambridge, and not before time.

There are two schools in the district, the Grove and King's Hedges Primary Schools. The Grove School is south of Campkin Road and L-shaped, facing south-west across its playground. Also on the estate is a surgery by Vickers and Undrill beyond the Grove School. A long block parallel to the road is broken by two wings with mono-pitch roofs forming an open court. White-painted boarding and brickwork are used within the court but elsewhere the brickwork is left unpainted. The architects have succeeded in creating a simple, almost 'farmhouse' style which is highly appropriate.



King's Hedges VI

To return to the centre of town, walk back along Carlton Way and Stretton Avenue. Cross over Victoria Road into St. Luke Street and descend to Chesterton Lane. On the right, tucked behind the frontage of Chesterton Lane, is Clare's Castle Hill Hostel. This is one of David Roberts's earlier collegiate works, built in 1957-8. It was a remarkable break, at this period, from the tradition of enclosed courts which had for too long dogged 20th century architects building in Cambridge. It has, moreover, an admirable simplicity of layout in the zig-zag pattern of rooms which leave room on the east side for washing facilities and gyp-rooms while giving the rooms themselves the optimum view. One weakness visible here occurs in later buildings of David Roberts: there is insufficient clarity between loadbearing and non-loadbearing brickwork.

Instead of going left towards the centre of town at Magdalene Street turn right up Castle Hill until, just before St. Peter's Church on the left, you reach Kettle's Yard, an alley leading alongside the churchyard. This leads directly to the remarkable museum-home of Jim Ede which takes its name from the alley.

KETTLE'S YARD EXTENSION

Date 1969-70

Architects Sir Leslie Martin and David Owers in collaboration with the Estate Management Advisory Service

Contractor Kidman & Sons Ltd.

Cost Stage I £33,000
Stage II £16,000

Requirement. 3,000 sq ft of display space on two floors as an extension to the existing Kettle's Yard with ancillary storage space (Stage I); 1,200 sq ft of display space on one floor (Stage II).

Description. In 1967 H. S. Ede gave his collection of paintings and sculptures, including a large number by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, to the University. As a result more space was needed to display the collection to the full. Mr. Ede had already had Kettle's Yard converted from three old cottages in 1957 to designs by Rowland Aldridge and himself. The walls are rough plastered inside and are faced with the original brick; a Georgian window was salvaged from the Prudential site. The new extension continues the line of the old buildings down the hill, at a slight angle, to Northampton Street. Stage I is the extension to the old house itself. The entrance to the old house is

under the link between two of the original cottages; inside the front door is a spiral staircase in a bay added in 1957 to the first floor. From here one walks across the link and down three steps into the third cottage; down three more steps and round the angle and one is in the link to the extension with a full view of the upper floor. Two more steps lead into the main gallery space. Connecting the upper floor with the ground floor is a well, to the right of which is a picture store. A flight of stairs runs down an internal structural wall to land opposite a second entrance from Kettle's Yard. This leads out into a sunken court which also gives access to Stage II, the single-storey extension which is used for visiting exhibitions. It consists of three interconnecting spaces set in echelon.

The galleries are lit by means of roof light strips which run parallel to, but not up against, the outer walls. 'Lytespan' spot-light track has been installed throughout but currently is used only in the Stage II gallery. Artificial lighting otherwise is by blue tungsten bulbs concealed in the roof-lights. Materials and finishes are simple. White painted rough plastering is used throughout on the walls internally; the upper floor is in pine boarding and the ground floors are in brick pavior. Externally, re-used stock bricks have been used for the ground floor and dark-stained weather boarding clads the upper floor which is set back behind the ground floor roof light.

Comment. For fifteen years, students have visited Kettle's Yard and savoured its collection of paintings and the unique environment in which it is housed. For Jim Ede's house is no ordinary gallery, but a place in which paintings, sculpture, furniture and objects of all kinds co-exist, an expression of personal taste and morality, to be shared and communicated. By 1967 when the collection was given to the University, the subtle and attractive conversion of the old house with its wood floors and rough-cast walls had become an established fact. To extend this ran the risk of losing all that was most remarkable about Kettle's Yard, but loss there has not been: the extension has succeeded triumphantly. It is entirely right that the normal entrance should be through the old house, which has nurtured the concept of the new. The way in which one descends from the first floor, level by level, until the full extent of the extension unfolds before one, is controlled, so that an easy transition is made from the old to the new; and the turning of a corner at the point of transition contains an element of surprise in the best picturesque tradition. The Stage I gallery is a relatively simple volume but by the judicious disposition of levels and internal walls a variety of spaces and vistas has been created, so that well-known objects may be caught from new and unusual angles. The Stage II



Kettle's Yard

... is inevitably less rich than Stage I, if only in that it is clearly not possible to create the same blend of domestic/private and communal use. Externally, the building is equally successful. The use of brick below has helped to maintain the gentle scale of Honey Hill, and make C. J. Bourne's old people's cottages seem somewhat archly pretty. Perhaps the most convincing measure of success is the way in which the new extension has made it possible to extend activities without destroying the original concept. Chamber concerts are now held from time to time with the musicians sitting under the well on the ground floor. The loan gallery makes possible a variety of interesting exhibitions to form a counterpoint to the main collection. How long it can continue as it does now is difficult to know: it is largely the personality of one man that has shaped and ordered it to its present form. Whether he can be replaced only time can tell.

Carry on under the archway at Kettle's Yard and turn left towards Northampton Street. On the right are the old people's cottages by C. J. Bourne at Honey Hill, and with Kettle's Yard and the spire of St. Peter's, they form a quasi village green. Turn left into Northampton Street and then right into Magdalene Street: the main body of Magdalene Street is on the left, with the Master's Lodge; Buckingham, Benson and Mallory Courts are on the right.



lar diagrid plan for dormitories at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania). The plinth of half-sunk basement rooms, clerestory lit, also has a promising life, but this is destroyed immediately above by collision between Roberts's balconies and his flimsy aluminium oriels, with their floor-to-ceiling glass; the balcony brickwork is vainly chamfered back a little, in order to minimize casualties. Ultimate disintegration takes place in the fracturing of the cross-wall structure at different widths in alternate bays, so as to let a little natural light into the staircases and into half the dressing rooms. This is the stuff of compromise, and it incidentally forces the staircases into a cramped octagon when they could easily have just been toplift.

Cross Victoria Avenue and walk along North Terrace towards the new Chesterton Bridge, finally opened in 1971 after a century of waiting. Turn right into Elizabeth Way and at the roundabout choose the subway exit for Occupation Road and the Howard Mallet Club. Notice, before plunging into the back streets, Lyster and Grillet's straightforward depot for Greene King (1966), and Feilden and Mawson's S.R.C.R.A. building (1960-1). Shortly after leaving the roundabout you will come to the Howard Mallet Club.

HOWARD MALLET CLUB

St. Matthew's Piece and Sturton Street

Date 1967-8

Architects J. C. Williams and John Barrow of the city architect's department

Contractor Grant & Dobson Ltd.

Cost £58,000

Requirement. Multi-purpose youth centre, open seven days a week throughout the year, with average nightly attendance of 300.

Description. This glittering temple of communal activity, replacing part of a drab playground, was ironically delayed by legal difficulties over building on common land. It is situated close to the future ring road in a twilight area of light industry and decayed housing beyond the new East Road flats. Externally it is a steel-framed workshop in the James Stirling manner, with aluminium patent glazing on a grassed plinth; on one side light buff brickwork forms the backcloth to a netball pitch. The timber-joisted roof of asphalt-covered flax-board has a pressed metal fascia. Within this shed is

a completely separate internal structure of fairfaced and painted brick, defining a wide variety of spaces based on the requirements of the Department of Education's post-Albemarle youth club at Withywood, Bristol. The whole building has been sunk 4 ft into the ground to make a two-storey interior (hence the grassed plinth). Three main spaces run through both levels: a craft room across the northern end, a large hall with a folding screen to divide a small hall off from it, and a central dance floor with hand platform. The visitor, entering on a 'bridge' at the north-west corner, follows an irregular route which 'discovers' for him areas of activity along it: first, up six steps, the control point and leader's room; then, turning at right angles, the gallery level of the main spaces; down steps to the right, the games area and coffee bar (with folding partitions to a group room and girls' sitting-room) which occupy only a single level, unexcavated beneath; and finally a relatively private cross corridor with large group and small group music and dark rooms placed over lavatories, general purpose room and oil-fired boiler.

Comment. In spite of the Ministry's excellent Withywood bulletin, youth centres are an adventure for the architect as well. On a small budget there are inherent contradictions in attempting to provide both the special spaces and corners with which disoriented youths can identify and also a structure sufficiently flexible to regroup itself round each particular phase of teenage fashion. Whatever the initial cost, a great deal of money will be needed for subsequent pushing around. Williams and Barrow have courageously attempted to solve the contradictions by separating completely the external and internal structures. The former may not be sufficiently sophisticated in finish and insulation (double glazing?); the latter's Corbusian curvatures may prove excessively immobile. Again, the equally courageous attempt at architectural control by the Smithsonian development of the 'route' may simply encourage by-passes via the coffee bar terrace and netball pitch entrance. Besides the central staircase, there are three different flights of steps up to the coffee bar and games area from the dance floor and large hall below; but one can still fear hideous congestion. As architecture for youth, this building tackles problems of gregariousness and individualism at a more fundamental level than anything the university has put up; it is exceedingly promising and deserves the success of being used and hacked to pieces (if it is preserved spodess as an architectural monument, it will have failed).

As you turn right into Vicarage Terrace, you will see in front of you Stage III of the East Road housing project. Turn left into St. Matthews Street and right into Norfolk Street and you will come to the shops which form part of the earlier stages.

EAST ROAD REDEVELOPMENT

East Road, Norfolk Street



- 1 Four-storey maisonettes 2 Three-storey houses
3 Two-storey old people's houses 4 Two-storey old people's flats 5 Two- and three-bedroom houses 6 'Man in the Moon' pub 7 Shops 8 Garages 9 Cherry Tree Club

Date	1959-68 (Stages I-III)
Architects	David Roberts & Geoffrey Clarke
Contractors	Johnson & Bailey Ltd.; Coulson & Son Ltd.
Cost	£148,650 (Stage I) £136,474 (Stage II)

Requirement. Comprehensive redevelopment, including 17 terrace houses, 90 maisonettes, shops and 24 old people's homes.

Description. This is the first major slum redevelopment in the centre of Cambridge. The flats and maisonettes of stages I-II occupy a triangular site between East Road and Norfolk Street.

Stages I and II are axially related to the side streets, not to the widened East Road, towards which zig-zags a continuous four-storey block of 72 two-bedroom maisonettes. Behind these, there are three courtyards, two closed and one open.

They are formed from straight terraces, three-storey three-bedroom houses of two different types. The ground level drops sharply from East Road, so that access to the zigzag block is direct to the second floor gallery, serving the upper maisonettes. This black timbered gallery crosses the block at each corner, being always on the north or east side. This leaves south and west aspects free for the bay windows of the living rooms. At the corners there are stairs down, communal waste-disposal chutes and clothes-drying areas. Half the ground-floor maisonettes and houses have their own walled yards. There is a block of 15 garages along the service road (a cruciform cul-de-sac) and 17 car ports built into houses. In the communal areas are a number of transplanted trees (one given by the Civic Trust) in addition to two large existing trees. The structure is of repetitive loadbearing brick cross-walls throughout, with exposed concrete floor slabs and yellow stock facing bricks. There are standardized aluminium floor-to-ceiling windows.

Stage III, between Staffordshire Street and St. Matthew's Street is developed differently with three blocks of housing running north/south, each divided into three. At the southern end, on Norfolk Street, are shops and 'The Man in the Moon' pub. Parking is arranged in two blocks, one just south of the houses and one to the north by East Road providing 192 car spaces. On the other side of St. Matthew's Street, which is retained as a main distributor road, is the Cherry Trees old people's club, also designed by David Roberts. Stage III is also of brick cross-walls, yellow-faced, and the shops form an echelon carrying on the axis the houses form. At each of the projecting corners of the shops is a large free-standing brick column.

Comment. David Roberts's low cost housing is quite as excellent as his college and school buildings. His clear lines of quiet brickwork have an underlying sensitivity to the austere, windswept climate of East Anglia. The facades are quite free, the windows not necessarily corresponding on all levels. While the continuous concrete floor slabs keep the layers clearly apart horizontally, the vertical division between houses is perhaps unfortunately disguised. The heavy timber planks protecting the galleries, placed flat to the facades, are an unusual and effective detail, preventing the feeling of insecurity usual in access galleries. Throughout there is a subtle play of diagonals, customary to Roberts's work. This is put to good effect in the shops, which face both ways down the street. Although the three-storey houses are a trifle narrow, all these buildings are pleasant to live in, spacious, light and warm in winter. The simple courtyard layout provides enclosed playgrounds and meeting places, without infringing



East Road redevelopment: shops in Norfolk Street

privacy.

There is one unfortunate aspect of the design, and of the site: the relationship to the widened East Road and to the probable redevelopments beyond. Although the buildings get away from the busy main road, the triangular patches of grass between are an unhappy hinterland. Nor, too, has Stage III developed any strong relationship with St. Matthew's church or the Cherry Trees club, which is particularly to be regretted. Two other aspects of Stages I-II are unfortunate: the unimaginative retention of existing streets and the inadequate provision of garages (one per four families). As a result the service roads are used for open-air parking, spoiling the courtyards. This pre-Buchanan parsimony is largely rectified in Stage III which overcomes the parking problem by concentrating it in two blocks rather than relying on culs-de-sac. The aim was for simplicity of layout and street-like spaces but pleasant intimacy is here replaced by a purposelessness which the blank walls of the car parks at either end do nothing to mitigate.

Turn left out of Norfolk Street into East Road. Very shortly you will come out onto Parker's Piece. This is one of Cambridge's most impressive open spaces, originally edged with low terraced houses on three sides and open to the south which served to emphasize the vastness of the green in the middle. Now considerable rebuilding has taken place, particularly at the corner at which you have just come in by. Quite the worst has been the Fire Brigade's headquarters just north of East Road by S. N. Cooke and Partners, put up in 1963-4. It is beyond belief how so terrible an example of 'liquorice allsorts' architecture could be built on one of Cambridge's best sites. More satisfactory is the newest of the multi-storey car parks, on the south side: it is similar to the one in Park Street in the use of precast concrete elements. Whether it



East Road Housing (Stage III)

was right to have a large lifeless element like this on Parker's Piece is questionable, even if the detailing is acceptable. It is, however, to be incorporated with a sports hall in the next stage. The best buildings are the new Swimming Baths and the Police headquarters. The latter, in particular, manages to echo the old scale of Parker's Piece buildings and remains nonetheless a positive addition to the townscape.

PARKSIDE SWIMMING POOL

Mill Road

Date 1961-3

Architect R. J. Wyatt of the city surveyor's department

Contractor Rattee & Kett Ltd.

Cost £224,620

Description. First demanded in 1950 and held up by delays in loan sanction, the indoor swimming pool was finally begun to a specification

slightly below the new Olympic standard: main pool 110 ft by 42 ft, learners' pool 36 ft by 20 ft, seating for 752 maximum. The rectangular hall presents a symmetrical end to Mill Road, flanked by single-storey wings containing women's changing rooms and laundry (left) and men's changing rooms with offices, club room and judges' room (right). Swimmers can walk directly to the pool through the spacious glazed foyer; but spectators have to go up some stairs to the upper foyer, containing the cafeteria, which connects to the main 532-seat gallery on the south side of the pool. The north wall is wholly glazed with an aluminium curtain wall, giving a panoramic view of Parker's Piece. The west wall behind the diving boards is windowless, but opposite there is another glazed curtain to the cafeteria.

The bath, itself of concrete, is spanned by the 81 ft roof trusses of a steel frame, which is faced externally in purple London bricks, with vitreous-enamel fascias and aluminium windows. Internal finishes are intended to be corrosion resistant and sound absorbent: the broken surfaces of the cedar-slatted ceiling, the hollow clay blocks on the west wall and the grey acoustic plaster over the spectators' gallery. The heated water circulates on the Surflo system; filtration plant, boiler and

plenum system are accommodated below the gallery, with service access screened from Mortimer Road by a mound. There is parking space on that side for 125 cars and 180 bicycles. Next to the pool is Parkside House, for the superintendent, which is faced in the same purple bricks, with some panels of grey rendering on the ground floor.

Comment. By far the best of the city surveyor's department's work, this is an impressively restrained solution to a complex problem within rigid cost limits. Few buildings in Cambridge have been better value for money or more appreciated by users. The use of materials externally is unpretentiously excellent: the large north-facing curtain wall establishes a delightful two-way relationship between the naked bodies in the pool and the natural world of grass and trees outside—not least when lit up after dark. Internally the yellow clay blocks and dark brown cedar slating provide an unusual richness of texture for such a building, while successfully reconciling the demands of durability with those of acoustics. A continuous strip of clerestory window separates crisply the 'floating' ceiling from the solid walls, in which only the single windows behind the gallery seem indecisive.

The lower level of changing rooms is prolonged at the opposite end by walls which effectively link the superintendent's house to the main building and give a sense of enclosure to the spacious lawn. Deposited on the grass with the best of intentions is a sadly underscaled group of bronze figures by the late Betty Rea.

Besides the loss of flexibility in separating male and female changing rooms symmetrically, the entrance is misleadingly formal for what is in fact an asymmetrical building. The gracefully bifurcated entrance porch of steel and timber (the pay box was resited in its present central alcove from an uncontrollable position on the other side of the foyer) is unpleasantly jarred by the diagonal teeth, in gold and grey terrazzo, of the staircase up to the cafeteria; and access to the gallery is far too circuitous, with spectators threading round behind the kitchen and servery. Each of the changing rooms, however, is admirably laid out in a V-shape around a central timber-slatted hanger store for clothes. Cubicles have curtains instead of doors.

POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Parkside

Date 1968-70

Architects P.R. Arthur, county architect;
M.R. Francis, project architect

Contractor Johnson & Bailey Ltd.

Cost £415,949

Requirement. Combined divisional headquarters for 'A' division (Cambridge City) and 'B' Division (rural Cambridgeshire) of new Mid-Anglia Police Authority.

Description. The site faces west across the vast open space of Parker's Piece and is being developed in depth around an open entrance courtyard along Warkworth Terrace, which may eventually form part of the re-aligned inner relief road. There are to be three separate buildings: an L-shaped administrative block of 47,400 sq ft, with the main enquiry office, operational group and cells accessible both from the courtyard and from Parker's Piece; a separate gymnasium block with the main hall over a ground floor containing changing rooms and the traffic wardens' section; and, on the site of the famous cycle pound at the back of the site, a multi-storey garage for 85 cars and 800 'found' cycles, with a maintenance section on the ground floor. In the basement of the office block are parade and locker rooms, stores, fall-out shelter and boiler house, the triple chimney stack of which projects with the water tank above the roofline.

The architects have aligned the principal offices in a regular terrace along Parkside, consciously rebuking the strident variety of the adjoining fire station.

Comment. The almost Beaux Arts *parti* is similar to Andrew Renton's St. Katharine Dock House in London: a structural wall system of storey-height precast concrete panels for the offices and common rooms, topped on the Parkside frontage by a residential penthouse for single officers, cadets and caretaker. The penthouse is a functionally logical excuse for providing in different materials—a steel frame with battered walls of lightweight concrete—a strong cornice and attic similar to the servants' bedrooms of the nearby Regency terraces. Much less happy is the introduction of stilted arches of *in situ* concrete for the ground floor cloister, with an appliqué entrance canopy in a kind of jazz-Tudor. Individual expression for the gymnasium and car park, by contrast was inevitable: the former in panels of loadbearing brick supporting concrete troughs and skylights, the latter in a split-level concrete frame similar to Park Street (see page 35) but more fully enclosed at the sides. The crowding of these various buildings is the result of using a site selected 20 years ago for the City police only and further limited by the setback along Warkworth Terrace.



Police Headquarters

Continue along Parkside to the Drummer Street bus station. On the north-western corner of Parker's Piece you will see Feilden and Mawson's unexceptional addition to the University Arms Hotel (1965-6); at the south-western corner is Matthew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners' Local Examination Syndicate building (1960-4, 1969-70). The third stage is in precast concrete, while the earlier parts are in brick with vertical slit windows between strongly expressed floor slabs. It scarcely makes a valuable addition to the townscape.

At Drummer Street turn left into the pedestrian precinct of Bradwells Court by Hughes and Bicknell (1960-2). It looks inconsequential now and the pedestrian spaces are not really very inviting, but it does make a positive contribution by providing a link between the centre, the bus station and Fitzroy Street. For the result of a combination between a property developer and two colleges (Christ's and Jesus) the result is mercifully successful.

Turn right out of Bradwells Court and right into Christ's College. The new building by Denys Lasdun lies on the far side of Third Court.

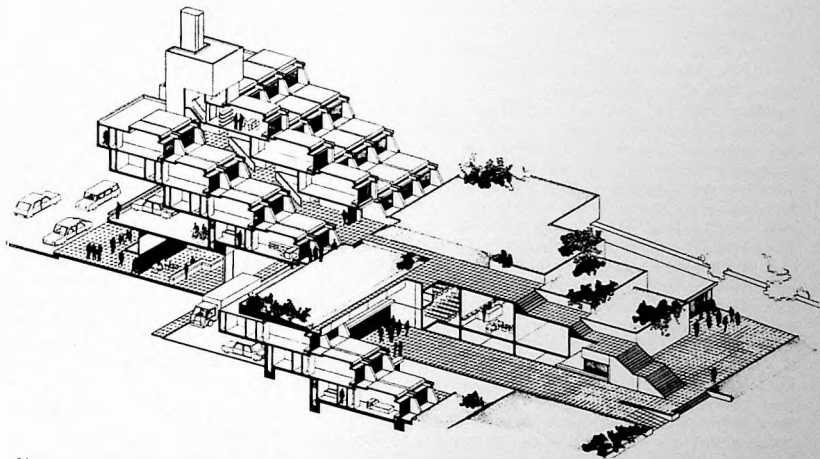
CHRIST'S COLLEGE

New Building

Date	1968-70 (Stage I)
Architects	Denys Lasdun & Partners
Contractor	Rattee & Kett Ltd.
Cost	Over £500,000 (Stage I)

Requirement. Stage I: Rooms for 66 undergraduates, 6 fellows' sets, common rooms, meeting hall, squash courts, launderette.

Description. The new building occupies the space behind the Stevenson building and west of the fellows' garden: it backs onto King Street. It consists of individual study-bedrooms on seven floors stepped over shops and parking facilities on King Street itself. The approach from the college is from the west side of Third Court. From here there are three alternatives. To the west next to the fellows' garden wall is one entrance to the



Christ's College, New Building

communal rooms. To the east there is a ground level access to the three lower tiers of rooms; at this entrance is a porter's lodge and access through to King Street beyond. Between these entrances, and brought forward from them, is an external flight of stairs which rises over the communal rooms to give access to a broad terrace and internal staircases serving the upper four tiers. The communal rooms consist of television room, undergraduates' and postgraduates' reading rooms and a general purpose hall with seats for 200. Below these in the basement are squash courts and changing rooms, a launderette and recreation room. This part of the building is not connected to the rest of the building which perhaps reflects its use for the college as a whole, but which involves long detours for the residents when they do not climb through the large windows facing west.

The stepping back of the study-bedrooms is highly ingenious. In order to reduce the total height of the building to a minimum, the rooms, 7 ft 6 in high, back onto corridors a foot lower. As it is, the lowest tier is below ground level, although the effect is mitigated by skilful excavation of the ground in front. The rooms are grouped in sixes, on the lower tiers along corridors, on the upper tiers in threes either side of the staircase. Each group shares a gyp-room, bathrooms and a trunk store. Above the entrances to the upper tiers are the fellows' sets. These are self-contained with bathroom, kitchenette and bedroom as well as a large study which projects slightly beyond the line

of each tier.

Towards King Street at ground level are the shops and access to the parking and service areas behind. From the ground level a ramp rises to deck parking above the shops; this deck level corresponds to the terrace on the other side of the building. From the deck there is access into the upper level entrance hall and so back into the College.

The structure is partly *in situ* and partly precast concrete. The building is tied back to grouped piers on the King Street front which support the plant rooms above the staircase. The finish both of the piers and of the plant rooms is exposed concrete. The study-bedrooms are built in a precast concrete system of panels and beams. Each room is formed of precast concrete cross-walls, self-finished with the aggregate exposed. Along the tops of the cross-walls run precast concrete beams which act as gutters and which support the single unit roof lids. At the front of each room a non-structural lintel extends the space of the room forward to the aluminium sliding windows; above the lintel is a clerestory light. A concrete sill unit provides a window seat below. Outside each room is a small patch of terrace made private by the extension of the cross walls. The rooms and corridors have fitted carpets.

The building is to be extended eventually as far as Hobson Street to provide a total of eleven shops and a pub on the corner of King Street and Hobson Street; it is hoped that a start might be made by 1973.

Comment. If Fitzwilliam (page 15) could lead us to doubt Lasdun's reputation as a great architect, then in Christ's we find a superb reaffirmation of his ability. For the quality of thought that lies behind both the conception and realization of this building make it one of Cambridge's most significant new buildings. Lasdun had already used the theme of the stepped section and the expression of the individual cell within the total scheme at the University of East Anglia, but it is here used with a greater finesse. The articulation of each room has been carried out almost to a fault: the individual roof lids resting upon each U-beam, they in their turn resting on the cross-walls, the non-structural lintels re-establishing the human scale within and without—all have a spectacular clarity of relationship. There is, moreover, a sensitivity in the way in which the building relates to the rest of the College. The approach from Third Court is magnificent with the long flight of stairs reaching forward along the axis of movement; and the way in which the Stevenson building has been used as a foil, so that it, too, has come to help in the creation of the new space, is highly successful. Only the plant rooms which punctuate the sky-line have turned out less crisp than Lasdun had evidently intended, if we are to judge by the drawings; and the concrete finish does not, perhaps inevitably, have a quality comparable to the precast work. The excellence of the concept as a whole, is equalled in the lesser details. The handrails show admirable restraint, finishes are universally good, and the furniture, chosen by the architects, is a lesson for many college bursars. It is the King Street side of the building which has evoked most comment, however: and little of it has been complimentary. A number of things has conspired to tell against the creation of a convincing street front, although it is conceivable that the extension of the building westwards will help to mitigate the effect. As the building stands at present, the voids created by the access to the parking areas have taken away from the effect of a unified ground level. A more adverse effect has been created by the car park deck and the over-sailing of the upper tier, for these emphasize, to the detriment of King Street, if not of the building itself, that this is indeed the back and not the front. It is interesting to note that the use of a steel joist set low over the shop windows (to establish the human scale, as with the lintels in the study-bedrooms) only serves to dwarf these shops in relation to the towering structure above them. Though from the college side the building is excellent, one is forced to ask whether the allocation of resources has been the right one. This is an expensive building, but this has not been reflected in the size of the rooms which are relatively small by Cambridge standards. Would it

have been better to spend the money lavished on the construction and finishes on extra floor space? For it is buildings such as this (and Powell and Moya's Cripp's Building, page 3) which lead us to wonder whether there has been any real advance in understanding the individual student's needs, as opposed to his need to relate to his fellow students, and the rest of the college.

Lasdun has thus raised once again the whole question of the college's needs and the relationship of these to the town community as a whole, by the very aggressiveness and single-mindedness with which he has carried out the concept. In some respects the college's ruthlessness towards King Street is akin to that of the royal founders of the 15th and 16th century colleges who carved out the university from the commercial heart of the town. What is not clear here is whether Lasdun has satisfied the college community's needs in the way that they did.

Leave the new building and walk out into King Street. There has been public outcry about the despoilation of the street by the three colleges (Christ's, Jesus and Sidney Sussex) and it is certainly true that architects and clients alike have shown scant regard for the structure of the street on which they were building. Opposite Christ's in Malcolm Place, the first stage of redevelopment for Jesus College by Ivor Smith & Cailey Hutton.

KING STREET REDEVELOPMENT

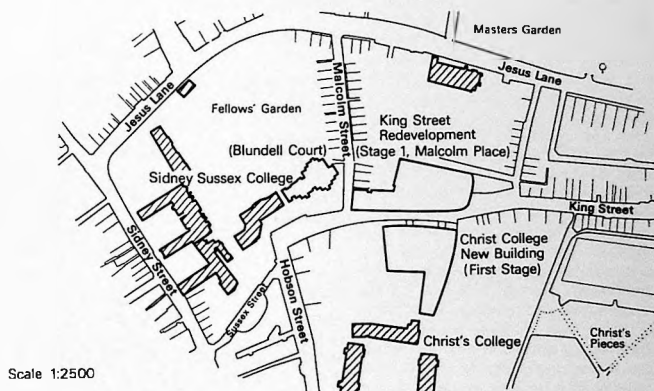
North side of King Street

Date 1968-70 (Stage I)

Architects Ivor Smith & Cailey Hutton Architects

Requirements. Stage I: Malcolm Place 46 flats, seven shops, public house, car parking. Stage II & III: 140 flats, car parking.

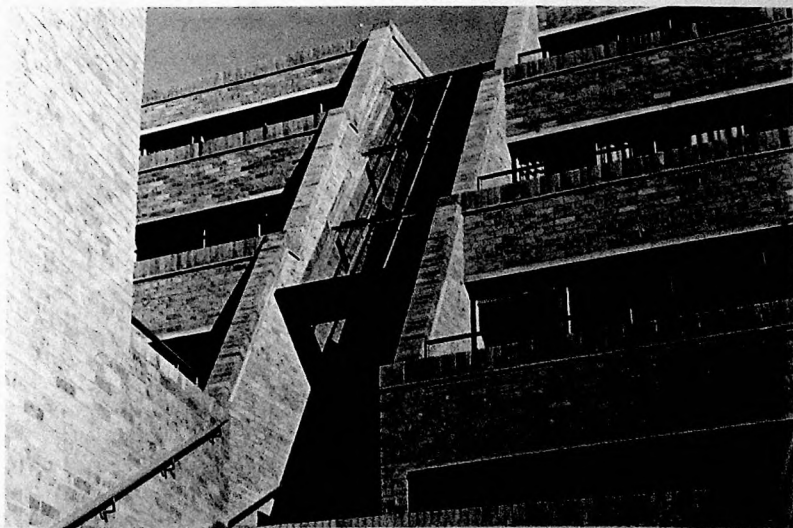
Description. King Street is a ramshackle but picturesque street of slightly seedy early nineteenth century shops, cottages and pubs, these latter being famed for the now forbidden 'King Street run'. To the north of King Street the land is owned by Jesus College who commissioned Ivor Smith to redesign the whole area. He considered the Malcolm Street and Jesus Lane terraces of the 1830s well worth preserving—as indeed they are—and turned his attention to the King Street housing. Because the site is bounded by open space—Christ's Pieces, Jesus College grounds, Midsummer Common—he felt a high density solution was acceptable. His proposals include



King Street Redevelopment

closing King Street at Milton's Walk and diverting traffic back to Jesus Lane. West of Milton's Walk he has placed two rows of flats, one of three, and the other of two storeys. Both these are raised one floor over garages and shops on the King Street side. The rear block has a stepped section to give views over to Christ's Pieces, and between the two is a pedestrian deck. It is the first of these which

has now been built. East of Milton's Walk, there is a similar arrangement, but the rear block is four storeys high and the lowest flat has a private court at deck level. A further two-storey block has been designed for the south side of King Street at this point. Unlike an earlier design, the scale is identical to that of the existing buildings.

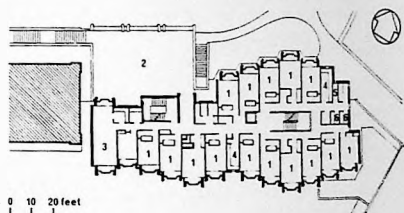


Malcolm Place

Comment. There are so many buildings in Cambridge which have been built during the last decade in which elaboration of detail delights, mystifies or merely amazes the layman that to come across a building as dry as Ivor Smith's Malcolm Place is a shock. Here there is no concession to the picturesque at all: the old line of King Street has been ruthlessly straightened and the shops present an unambiguous and almost harsh front to the street. Only on the stepped terraces of flats behind is there any softening of this four-square approach. However, it may be that time will mellow Malcolm Place, as it did the early nineteenth century terraces before it, and that personal idiosyncracies will create interest for which the architecture will act as a foil. On the other hand, the court behind the shops is not really a convincing space and if there proves to be insufficient freedom for the residents to make their own environment then it will simply remain drab. In a way, Ivor Smith's building is closer to the original King Street architecture than either of the other two contenders, but he is still a long way from creating a satisfactory street frontage. Perhaps Stages II and III will be more convincing.

SIDNEY SUSSEX

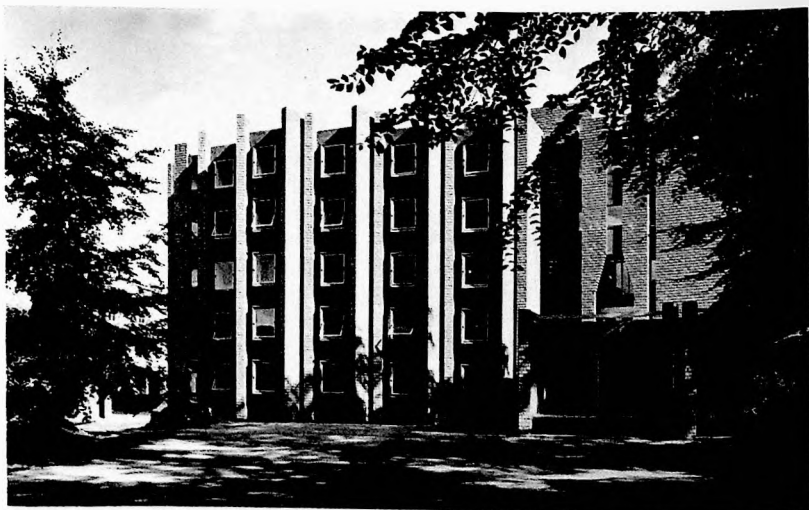
Blundell Court



First floor plan

- 1 Undergraduates 2 Terrace over common room
3 Fellow's set 4 Gyproom 5 Shower 6 Bathroom

Sidney's Blundell Court is the third of the trio that has blown King Street apart. It lies just west of Malcolm Street.



Sidney Sussex, Blundell Court

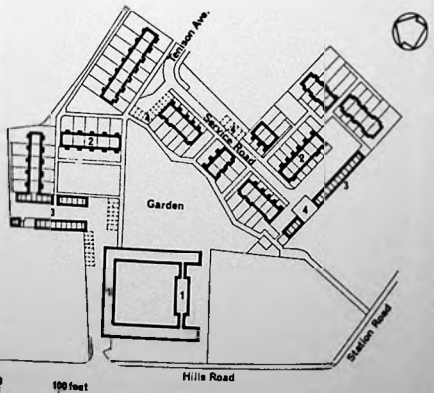
Surveyed on date facing south

Comment. This is a particularly interesting and attractive example of Davis Roberts's personal yet functional design. The assembly hall of 1953-4, in spite of its simple structure, has brick decoration (diapering), which lacks the refinement of Mr. Roberts's later work. The newer buildings have a restrained, precise formality that exactly suits a convent. The planning is excellent and the relationship with the Victorian villas and their neo-Georgian extensions is managed with great delicacy. Stage II, with its symmetrical formality about the entrance, is a little unbalanced by the adjoining bulk of Stage III in the same materials. The glazed staircase is an insufficient separation. However, the new buildings keep in scale with and enhance the surrounding early Victorian streets. Only with the latest addition have the buildings begun to seem too high, despite the device of recessing the top windows.

Continue down Bateman Street to Hills Road. Opposite and to the left is the larger of two housing schemes by the now defunct Span Developments.

HIGHSETT

Hills Road and Tenison Avenue



1 Flats 2 Houses 3 Garages 4 Car parks

Date 1958-60, 1962, 1963-4

Architects Eric Lyons & Partners

Contractors Wates Ltd. (Stage I). Rattee & Kett Ltd. (Stages II and III)

Requirement. 85 flats, maisonnettes and houses for Span Developments Ltd.

Description. When first published in 1957, this project aroused some controversy because Eric Lyons proposed a 15-storey block of bachelor flats, set well back from the road in centre of an open court flanked by lower terraces. The strongly modelled concrete tower (which has probably influenced recent work by the G.L.C.) was reluctantly accepted by the planning authorities but is not now to be erected. In its place, salvaged from the previous Victorian villas, is a triangular garden with luxuriant trees, banks and grottoes. The first building, on a deceptively short frontage to Hills Road, is a three-storey closed courtyard forming an atrium to the rest of the site. From the walled gateway to the street, a paved way leads axially through the courtyard, penetrating the east and west wings at ground level through a cloister of slim concrete columns and beams painted white. Glazed staircases lead to 31 flats of various types in three wings. In the fourth (north), a cloister on the court side supports six 'studio maisonnettes', which are entered on the other side from an external gallery at first-floor level over 12 garages. The service road leads further back to a compound of 25 garages; these are on one side of an informal Stage II courtyard of two-storey houses, 17 in all stretching to the site's back entrance in Tenison Avenue. From there a second service cul-de-sac gives access beyond the central garden to Stage III: 31 more houses, mainly three-storey, plus 17 more garages and a walled pathway to Station Road. The basic structure throughout is of 9 in brick crosswalls, with concrete slabs and underfloor heating. In Stage I, apart from the concrete-columned cloisters, facings are primarily in dark blue tile-hanging—the arrowhead shape specially designed by the architects—with asbestos panels to the ground floor, aluminium windows and end walls of pale buff bricks. Stage II by contrast has yellow stock bricks, white weatherboarding and glazed porches; the crosswalls, projecting slightly into the fascia, alternate with broader strips of walling separating the through living-rooms from a parallel strip of kitchen, staircase and study. In the taller houses of Stage III, hard golden bricks with raked joints largely disguise the crosswalls and floors. Panels of white boarding vertically connect the big windows of ground floor dining room, first floor living room and second floor master

bedroom. The stack of service rooms alongside, with a high boarded water tank, is recessed behind a projecting cloakroom and porch—and the dustbin enclosure extends still further to wall in a forecourt.

Comment. Highsett displays all the best Span qualities and is uncommonly interesting in showing three different phases of Eric Lyons' development. One of the few post-war architects to specialize in housing, he has achieved an uncanny sense of place partly because of his long experience in combating the by-laws which tend to chop up enclosure into sausage lengths (with windy grass verges). Half-naked children gambol in the gardens of Highsett, fully protected from the East Anglian blast of wind. But also, like Lutyens or Nash, Lyons succeeds in unashamedly embracing his clients' aspirations. Span can be sneered at for being 'middle class utopia', a Colour Supplement heaven—but that is what it is. Instead of the crumbling whiteness of the Pioneers or the neo-slummy textures of the Brutalists, Lyons provides a permissive Arcadia of natural surfaces, descended from Blaise Hamlet and Bedford Park. Those who want the spacious and the natural (including most architects) will no doubt purchase old houses instead; but Span-dwellers prefer compactness and artificiality with plenty of built-in furniture, spotless kitchenettes and a garnishing of instant landscape. Highsett's special attraction is kinetic: vistas constantly dissolve and re-assemble, as the pedestrian passes from enclosed court and formal paving, through an exotic garden to the grander walled avenues of Stage III, and then obliquely out of Station Road through a miniature alleyway. Separation of vehicles from pedestrians is handled effortlessly without losing the car or confusing the postman. The irritations start, however, as soon as one stops to look—in Stage I, for example, at the arty forecourt to Hills Road and at the sweet-toothed Surrey tile-hanging. Stage II, if rather bald, is more East Anglian in its yellow walling and white fencing. Stage III is the most dubious part, with its sudden change to hard golden bricks and an intense vertical emphasis, carried to excessive heights in the narrow-walled gates and in the silly outside light (with house number on it). The *piano mobile* living room and the high-walled garden are an acceptable response to the demand for 'town houses' with a certain swank; but too much of the dwelling seems like an attempt by Lyons to get back at his brutalist critics. The drawing board includes a series of projections and recessions including a particularly emphatic mullion in the big windows which is more like a crosswall than the crosswall itself. An absurd precast concrete pillar



Highsett Stage 1, view to Hills Road from the court

cloakroom window, which implies an overflow from the cistern. Much neater and wittier mannerism appears in the butterfly gable walls, where an insubstantial shiny pipe appears to 'support' the whole roof through another oversized concrete spouthead.

From Highsett go southwards along Hills Road to Station Road. At the corner of Station Road is Trehearne & Norman, Preston & Partners' banal Kett House (1961-2) with its curious bas-relief by Willi Soukop of Kett's tree on one blank end wall. On the same side in Station Road itself are two office blocks of somewhat better detailing by Fitzroy Robinson & Partners (1968-71) built to a layout by Brett & Pollen for St. John's. Yet another office block on the left hand side of Station Road, Great Eastern House, designed by H. H. Powell, Chief Architect, B. R. Eastern Region (1956-7) was one of the earliest to use precast construction in

Cambridge. The Station itself has recently been converted (1970-1) by Powell's successor, Sydney Hardy, and Sancton Wood's magnificent arcade has now been returned to something approaching its original state. It would have been better had the arches been left entirely unencumbered, and the off-centre canopy omitted.

* * * * *

Postscript. If you are travelling away by train watch out for the University Press building by Beard Bennett Wilkins & Partners (1961-3), on the right and the appalling new Addenbrooke's Hospital on the left by Easton & Robertson, Cusdin, Preston & Smith (1960-2, 1966-) which is now dominated by a hideous parody of a campanile in the form of the boiler house flue. If your train goes to King's Cross you will pass and be able to visit two garden cities (Letchworth and Welwyn) and a new town (Stevenage). If your train goes to Liverpool Street you will pass, but

*probably not stop at, Harlow new town; there are
good stations at Harlow, Bishop's Stortford and
Broxbourne, all by H. H. Powell.*

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